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This 1965 report summarizes briefly the purposes, functions, and projects of the Research Council of the Great Cities Program for School Improvement. Described are the initial projects in which vocational education, gray areas, fiscal policy, and teacher education were studied. New areas of involvement include instructional materials development, rehabilitation of school facilities, and federal programs. (NH)

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"CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED"
SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

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report
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the great cities program for school improvement

Office of Education-EEOP
Research and Materials Branch

REPORT '65

A Summary Report 1964-1965

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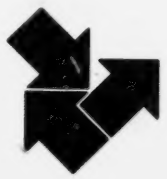

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Office of Education-EEOP
Research and Materials Branch

The Research Council of the Great Cities Program for School Improvement is an organization of the large cities of the United States whose primary purpose is to conduct studies of unique problems faced by the Great Cities in their efforts to meet the comprehensive public school needs of their citizens, to coordinate projects designed to provide solutions to these problems and to sponsor the implementation of the results and findings of such studies to promote the improvement of education in the Great Cities.

The following large cities are members of The Research Council: Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Buffalo, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; New York, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; St. Louis, Missouri; San Francisco, California; and Washington, District of Columbia.

The Research Council was organized in 1956 for the purpose of studying educational problems which were of special concern and interest to large cities, and was incorporated on February 27, 1961, as a not-for-profit organization.

Since 1956 The Research Council has conducted projects and research programs in four specific areas of involvement:

Vocational Education—studies of different facets of vocational education programs conducted by the large cities to prepare their young people for participation in the world of work; *Gray Areas*—studies of the educational needs of urban youth who are handicapped in their classroom learning by differences in environment or background from the prevailing urban culture; *Fiscal Policy*—studies of estimated fiscal needs of the Great Cities and of probable sources of revenue available to meet those needs; *Teacher Education*—studies relating to the problems of recruitment, preparation and retention of professional personnel.

The Council is continually broadening its interests and activities in the light of the ever-increasing needs of the large-city school systems. New areas of concern which are in the process of development include the following:

Instructional Materials —a project has been undertaken to facilitate the exchange of individual, city-prepared instructional materials among all the member cities and to develop effective guidelines for textbook publishers in the form of suggested instructional materials needed for the meaningful teaching of urban youth.

Rehabilitation of School Facilities—a research project sponsored by The Research Council and funded by the Educational Facilities Laboratories of the Ford Foundation is exploring the problem of remodeling hundreds of older schools, both to accommodate the burgeoning school enrollments and the newer instructional methods and techniques currently in use.

Federal Programs—a series of meetings was conducted in Washington, D.C., on January 28 and 29, 1965, to acquaint the Great Cities' superintendents, board of education members and staff with federal programs undertaken by the U.S. Office of Education, Office of Economic Opportunity and Office of Manpower Training and Development which are of special concern in large city school systems.

New projects undertaken in established areas of interest are also under way. They include the following:

Vocational Education—a series of regional conferences to be held in the Midwest, East and West have been planned to give business, industry, labor, government and the schools an opportunity to develop and carry forward an action program to better prepare young people for entry into the world of work.

Teacher Education—a project has been undertaken to set up demonstration centers within the Great Cities for the pre-service and in-service training of teachers for disadvantaged children. Cooperative plans for the centers have been developed by two co-directors from eleven cities—one representative each from the city school system and an interested local college or university.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS—The Committee on Instructional Materials, composed of five representatives from member city school systems, was organized in March 1964, for the purpose of facilitating the exchange among member cities of instructional materials prepared by the individual school systems. This committee was formed following a report which was prepared on policies and procedures for textbook selection by a committee of superintendents and board members.

Because of the pressing demand for instructional materials geared to the needs of children living in large urban complexes, the Committee felt it was of prime importance to acquaint publishing companies with the schools' interests and needs in this area. As a result, initial contacts were made and a close working relationship was developed with the American Textbook Publishers Institute, an organization of textbook publishing companies, which publishes books principally used in elementary and secondary schools.

At a meeting in Chicago on June 3, 1964, which was attended by the Committee on Instructional Materials of the Research Council and a special Liaison Committee of ATPI, the publisher representatives requested a list of suggested instructional materials by topic and grade level, to meet the needs of youth residing in large urban centers. In response to this request, a report entitled "Suggestions for Instructional Materials Designed to Meet the Needs of Urban Youth" was prepared by the Committee on Instructional Materials. This report was outlined in detail by the Committee at The Research Council's semi-annual Fall Conference held at Pittsburgh in November, 1964.

The report outlined four general study areas: Urban Areas, Occupational Opportunities, American History, Reading, and indicated instructional materials' needs in these four areas, and curricula suggestions to implement them. The Committee report stressed the following:

Urban Areas—Presentation of contemporary and realistic problems of an urban society.

Depiction of the complexity of urban areas as groups of communities.

Description of the diverse backgrounds of groups living in the urban complex.

Vocational Opportunities—Development among young people of an appreciation for and recognition of the dignity of all honest labor and of the satisfaction gained from a job well done.

American History—Development of meaningful ways of presenting American history to groups handicapped by differences in social class, racial background or environmental limitations.

Reading—Development of methods to aid children in the acquisition of reading and listening skills, the speech patterns and pronunciation of the area in which they reside and an understanding and appreciation of a variety of literary works.

Several recommended joint activities for The Research Council and ATPI were proposed at the 1964 Fall Conference. Some of these include: the establishment of a central library of instructional materials oriented toward urban life; exchange of ideas between school and publisher personnel, as well as visitations by teams of publishers to large city school systems; organization of a conference co-sponsored by The Great Cities Research Council and the American Textbook Publishers Institute. After additional study and revision, the report prepared by the Committee on Instructional Materials was submitted to ATPI and should serve as an effective guideline in acquainting publishers with urban needs in instructional materials.

REHABILITATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES—The school systems of the large cities of America have experienced a decade of incredible increases in enrollments. In addition to the ever-increasing number of children, the large city school systems have been called upon to serve an expanding diversity of children's needs and to incorporate into the schools newer instructional methods and techniques. Providing physical facilities for the increased numbers of pupils, while increasing the diversity of program offerings, requires the rehabilitation of existing facilities as well as extensive programs of new construction.

For the past two years The Research Council has been concerned with the development of an approach to the solution of this problem. At The Council's Spring Conference in 1964 a presentation was given which outlined a series of problems that could be successfully attacked through modernization. The conference participants expressed an enthusiastic interest in pursuing this topic as a research project. In the summer of 1964 a staff planning committee was organized to develop a proposal for a school rehabilitation project to be funded through a foundation, governmental agency or other interested organization.

As an outgrowth of this preliminary work, The Research Council has initiated a research project designed to explore the problem of updating and remodeling hundreds of outmoded urban school plants. This project is to be financed through a grant from the Educational Facilities Laboratories of the Ford Foundation. A senior associate of one of the country's leading architectural firms is directing the study.

The project is designed to: investigate the art of building modernization generally, including knowledge gained from industrial and commercial buildings where applicable; develop criteria for determining when rehabilitation is practicable; select a case study in each of the Great Cities and develop plans through architectural competition for its rehabilitation; determine criteria for deciding how much can reasonably be spent on building rehabilitation.

The project has been divided into three action phases.

Phase I—a city-by-city survey is being conducted to determine what can be remedied in the old schools and what is economically feasible to remedy; a report will be issued on examples of good practice in modernization wherever found.

Phase II—help will be given each city with one building selected by the city as a prototype for rehabilitation.

Phase III—findings of the study will be disseminated among the urban school systems generally.

The three phases of the program will cover a period of three years' time.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS—At The Research Council's Fall Conference held in Pittsburgh in November, 1964, a panel of consultants from the U. S. Office of Education discussed the Vocational Act of 1963 and related programs.

As a result of this presentation and of The Council's continuing interest in federal programs, a conference was planned for the month of January in Washington, D. C., to further acquaint the Great Cities' membership with the educational activities of governmental departments and offices.

The conference was held on January 28 and 29, with thirteen superintendents, forty-four board of education members and thirty-five staff personnel in attendance. Presentations were made by staff representatives from the U. S. Office of Education, Office of Economic Opportunity and Office of Manpower Training and Development. Federal programs of importance to large city school systems were described by the governmental offices represented, and detailed questions concerning possible individual programs and projects were answered. Highlights of the conference were the discussion of the proposed "Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965," and the opportunity afforded participants on the second day of the meeting for individual conferences with staff in the various departments.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION—In conjunction with its continuing interest in vocational education, The Research Council has initiated a research and development program to mobilize and coordinate the resources of cities, business, industry, labor, government and schools to fulfill the following objectives: better prepare young people for entry into the world of work; remove the road blocks which presently bar many youths from taking their places in the job world when it is normal for them to do so; coordinate the activities of business, industry and education in the preparation of young people for future employment; eliminate the present two years' time lag between the identification of new job opportunities and the inclusion of specific preparation programs in the schools; provide for specific delineation of the skills and knowledge needed for various job responsibilities.

A proposal incorporating these goals has been approved by the U. S. Office of Education, and regional conferences will be held in the Midwest, East and West to give business, industry, labor, government and the schools an opportunity to develop and implement an action program. Areas to be considered at these conferences include: identification of the kinds of jobs presently available or to be developed in the immediate future; definition of the knowledge and skills which will be needed for successful performance in these jobs; development of course offerings, both within the school and outside, which are needed to provide the knowledge and skills in demand.

The conferences are scheduled over a period of three years—1965-1968. The 1965 conferences will initiate action; the second series of conferences will evaluate programs to date and make changes or modifications where necessary; the third series will structure continuation of effective programs and activities.

Regional steering committees representing business, industry, labor, government and the schools are planning the initial conferences and subsequent regional action. The Research Council and its member city school systems will follow through with the commitments to action at the local level.

TEACHER EDUCATION—The School-University Teacher Education Project is an endeavor which has been in the process of development since 1962. The Staff Planning Group for this Project consists of three representatives from city school systems and the Project Director. The goal of the Project is to prepare in a more realistic manner greater numbers of teachers for service in disadvantaged urban areas.

In planning the direction the Project would take, repeated stress was placed upon the problems of securing and keeping quality teachers in urban school systems, as well as the special needs and problems inherent in teaching disadvantaged children. Depth studies resulted in the formation of a proposal which was developed to set up a project to be funded through the U. S. Office of Education.

In June of 1963 a seminar which included participants from colleges and universities and city school systems was held to launch this program. The seminar endeavored to identify problem areas in teacher education that needed to be researched. A prototype proposal was developed in which one or more demonstration centers, staffed and operated cooperatively by city school systems and local colleges or universities, were to be established.

A grant for further development of the training center concept was made available in the spring of 1964 and three Task Force meetings were held in Chicago during the Fall of 1964.

These three Task Force conferences included presentations by consultants and small group work-sessions. Participants included staff from city school systems and colleges and universities. With the teaching of disadvantaged children the focus of attention, the following topics were discussed:

#1—September 21-23, 1964. Identification of teacher behaviors.

#2—October 14-16, 1964. Identification of curriculum content to implement those behaviors.

#3—November 4-6, 1964. Establishment of measurement techniques for evaluation of the behaviors.

Task Force #1—The papers presented by consultants to this Task Force stressed recommended behaviors for effective teaching of disadvantaged children. After these initial presentations, conference participants divided into sub-groups for further study. Statements from the consultants' papers were utilized wherever helpful. A statement incorporating the findings of this Task Force highlighted the following points: emphasis was placed on illustrative behaviors rather than attitudes; many of the behaviors were found to be pervasive while others related especially to the needs of disadvantaged children; the description of teacher behaviors was geared to specific children's needs; areas of knowledge needed by teachers were also stressed. A ten-city survey conducted among teachers and superintendents to obtain material on teacher behaviors and children's needs was utilized by the Task Force in its discussions and recommendations.

Task Force #2—The major concern of this conference was the incorporation of Task Force #1's behaviors into specific programs for teacher training. Papers by consultants triggered the meeting. Discussion centered on the following topics: environment in which practice teaching can be developed; understanding, knowing and doing—three important aspects of teacher education and practices into which teacher behaviors can be channeled; ideas for a total teacher education program as well as for the demonstration centers; description of center locations, teachers and staff.

Task Force #3—Papers by consultants presented critiques to assist in the establishment of measurements of Task Force #1 behaviors. After the presentations were made, the participants divided into three working sub-groups. The need for instrumentation formulated to measure behaviors of teachers of disadvantaged youth was generally stressed. The conference concluded that teacher behaviors could be generally categorized as follows:

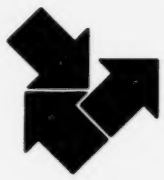
1. those behaviors that can be evaluated at the present time; what instruments may be used and how the evaluation can be carried out.

2. those that cannot be measured.

3. those that can be evaluated, but measurement will involve a lengthy procedure —or—we do not have existing instruments at present.

Co-Directors' Conferences—On December 1 and 2, 1964, a Participatory Conference of Co-Directors was held in Chicago to begin work on individual city proposals. Eleven cities were represented by city school system and local college or university co-directors. Types of proposals to be submitted (whether for elementary or secondary demonstration centers) were tentatively identified and the development of preliminary drafts was set in motion in individual city work sessions. Consultant help was provided to answer questions concerning the formation of these proposals.

On February 1 and 2, 1965 a Co-Directors' Summary Conference was held in Chicago. All eleven cities presented drafted proposals for consideration. Four consultants worked with each city's co-directors, making suggestions for revisions and corrections. Final drafts of these proposals were submitted to the U. S. Office of Education on March 1, so that the proposals, if funded, could become operational in September 1965.



ONGOING COUNCIL PROJECTS AND CONFERENCES—Gray Area Projects—The Great Cities have explored the educational needs of children whose backgrounds were so meager or so different from those of the prevailing urban culture that they were handicapped in their classroom learning, and as a result of such findings have conducted projects in these "Gray Areas." A central project was proposed, and eleven cities have developed individual projects based on some phase of the central study and received grants to partially finance their programs. The Research Council has facilitated the exchange of information regarding the projects and assisted individual cities to evaluate some of the more promising practices that have emerged from the several programs for the disadvantaged.

Fiscal Policies—In the area of school finances, the Council has conducted and cooperated in the execution of a series of studies. The immediate fiscal needs of the Great Cities were examined in 1961. Since this initial study, (1) a series of policies was recommended as a basis for action; (2) studies have been conducted to provide a cost analysis of special programs of education in the large cities, including cost comparisons of academic, vocational and technical high schools and among the various subject areas; (3) studies recently completed deal with the development of basic formulation of cost determinants for operating expenses and capital outlay. Another study currently under way will attempt to show how the structural arrangements surrounding decision-making shape results as measured by educational expenditures. The latest avenue of inquiry involves those economic concepts included in the area of human capital as investment.

Annual Conferences—In order to acquaint the Great Cities with the progress of ongoing Council activities and to introduce proposed projects for consideration, semi-annual conferences are held each year in the spring and fall. Participants at these conferences include school superintendents, board of education members and staff personnel from each of the member cities. Committee work-sessions meet during the duration of the conference to plan and advance projects which are currently under way, i.e., teacher education, instructional materials. Panel discussions by school staff members are conducted on areas of concern to the participants. Consultants and guest speakers present projects in which Council action might be initiated or bring the benefits of their knowledge and experience to current areas of involvement.

As a part of the work of the conference, the Board of Directors meets and acts on proposals which are brought forward for recommendation, and reviews the business operations of The Council since the last conference. The Board's annual business meeting is held during each Spring conference.

The location of the conferences rotates among the fifteen member cities, and each conference lasts approximately three days.

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THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITIES PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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